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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2581
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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0967
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2976
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2361
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH NEW KYRGYZ SPEAKER

REF: BISHKEK 545

Classified By: DCM Lee Litzenberger, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) On July 1, Ambassador and DCM met with the new Speaker of Parliament, Aitibai Tagayev. Tagayev, an MP from the Ak Jol party, was a relative unknown in Kyrgyz politics prior to being selected to replace Adahkan Madumarov, who was ousted as Speaker on May 29 (reftel). During the brief meeting, Tagayev displayed limited knowledge of current legislation, and was reluctant to engage in a substantive discussion. Curiously, although Tagayev clearly understood Russian, which the Ambassador used throughout, he chose to speak exclusively in Kyrgyz, claiming that other deputies insist he speak Kyrgyz when meeting with foreigners. A staff interpreter translated his remarks into English.

12. (C) Asked about the controversial broadcasting law, which was passed by parliament and signed by President Bakiyev June 4, Tagayev said that the law would be re-introduced to parliament for further review and evaluation in September. Ambassador agreed that the broadcast law would benefit from further review and encouraged the participation of OSCE in the development of this and other draft legislation. Asked about other legislative initiatives, Tagayev noted that parliament, in preparation for the presidential elections in 2010, would discuss the current electoral code. Tagayev also boasted about the new tax code, which reduced general taxes for the population (VAT) from twenty to twelve per cent, but he asserted that the legislation was approved, when in fact it has only passed the first reading and had yet to be approved by the full parliament. His staff corrected him in Kyrgyz.

13. (C) Comment: When Tagayev was named Speaker, the consensus view was that he had no political ambitions of his own (unlike his predecessor Madumarov) and would be loyal to the Bakiyev administration. Tagayev, who hails from a small village in the southern Osh oblast, seemed uncomfortable with the formal aspects of an official meeting with foreign diplomats. After initial greetings and informal discussions about the Ambassador's time in Kyrgyzstan, Tagayev gave the impression that the meeting was finished and thanked her for the visit, and when Ambassador expressed her desire to ask

some questions about parliamentary activity, Tagayev had a deer-in-the-headlights look and had few specifics to offer. While Tagayev may grow into the position, at this point he seems to be a person without ideas of his own who will not deviate from the Kyrgyz White House script.

YOVANOVITCH